WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. An image data communication system in which a plurality of client computers and a server system are capable of communicating with each other via a network, wherein one of said client computers includes:

an original-image data specifying unit for specifying original-image data that is to be transmitted to said server system; and

an original-image data transmitting unit for transmitting the original-image data, which has been specified by said original-image data specifying unit, to said server system; and

said server system includes:

an original-image data receiving unit for receiving the original-image data transmitted from said original-image data transmitting unit;

an image data generating unit, which responds to receipt of the original-image data by said original-image data receiving unit, for generating reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data; and

a unit for associating the original-image data, which has been received by said original-image data receiving unit, and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated by said image data generating unit.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said server system further includes a specific-format image data generating unit for generating image data having a predetermined specific data format that is independent of the data format of the original-image data.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein said image data generating unit generates reduced-data-quantity image data of a prescribed format that is independent of the data format of the original-image data.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein said server system further includes a memory in which the quantity of original-image data that can be stored is allocated beforehand to each client computer, said memory storing temporarily the original-image data that has been received by said original-image data receiving unit;

said original-image data transmitting unit of said client computer sending said server system the original-image data having a data quantity less than the quantity of data allocated beforehand.

5. The system according to claim 4, wherein said server system further includes a data-quantity information transmitting unit for sending said client computer information representing a pre-allocated data quantity capable of being stored in said memory;

said original-image data transmitting unit of said client computer sending said server system the original-image data having a data quantity less than the quantity of data allocated beforehand based upon said

information, which represents the data quantity, transmitted from said data-quantity information transmitting unit of said server system.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein said server system further includes a storage unit for storing the original-image data and the reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages.

7. The system according to claim 1, wherein said server system further includes a color adjustment unit for applying color adjustment processing to at least one item of image data among the original-image data and reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages.

8. The system according to claim 1, wherein said client computer further includes:

a data specifying unit for specifying image data that is to undergo color adjustment among the original-image data and reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages; and

a specifying-data transmitting unit for sending said server system specifying data which represents the image data that has been specified by said data specifying unit; and

said server system further includes a specifying-data receiving unit for receiving the specifying data that has been transmitted from said specifying-data transmitting unit of said client computer;

said color adjustment unit applying color adjustment processing to image data, which has been

specified by said specifying data received by said specifying-data receiving unit, among the original-image data and reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages.

9. The system according to claim 6, wherein said client computer further includes a transmission requesting unit for sending said server system a request to transmit at least one item of image data among the original-image data and reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages that has been stored in said storage unit; and

said server system further includes:

a transmission-request receiving unit for receiving the transmission request transmitted from said transmission requesting unit of said client computer;

a first reception-privilege determination unit for determining whether the privilege to receive image data specified by the transmission request received by said transmission-request receiving unit resides with the client computer that issued the transmission request; and

a data transmitting unit, which is responsive to a determination by said first reception-privilege determination unit to the effect that the privilege resides with said client computer, for reading the image data specified by the transmission request out of said memory unit and transmitting this image data to said client computer, and which is responsive to a determination by said first reception-privilege determination unit to the effect that the privilege does

not reside with said client computer, for sending said client computer data indicating that transmission is not allowed.

10. The system according to claim 6, wherein said server system further includes an end-message transmitting unit, which is responsive to storage of the original-image data and the reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages in said storage unit, for transmitting a message indicative of end of storage to said client computer that transmitted the original-image data.

11. The system according to claim 6, wherein said client computer further includes:

an image search-condition input unit for inputting image search conditions; and

an image search-condition transmitting unit for sending said client computer the image search conditions that have been input from said image search-condition input unit; and

said server system further includes:

an image search-condition receiving unit for receiving image search conditions that have been transmitted from said image search-condition transmitting unit;

a search unit for searching, on the basis of the image search conditions received by said image search-condition receiving unit, at least one item of data among the original-image data and the reduced-data-

quantity image data of two stages stored in said storage unit; and

a search-result information transmitting unit for sending said client computer information relating to results of the search conducted by said search unit.

12. The system according to claim 11, wherein said server system further includes a second reception-privilege determination unit for determining whether the privilege to receive image data, which has been found as a result of the search conducted by said search unit, resides with said client computer;

said search-result information transmitting unit, in response to a determination by said second reception-privilege determination unit to the effect that the reception privilege resides with said client computer, sending said client computer the image data found as a result of the search conducted by said search unit.

13. The system according to claim 1, wherein said client computer further includes an image display unit for displaying an image representing by image data of a prescribed format; and

said server system further includes a format conversion unit for converting the original-image data that has been received by said original-image data receiving unit to a format that is capable of being displayed by said image display unit;

said image data generating unit generating the reduced-data-quantity image data having a format that is

capable of being displayed by said image display unit.

14. A server system capable of communicating with a client computer via a network, comprising:

an original-image data receiving unit for receiving the original-image data transmitted;

an image data generating unit, which responds to receipt of the original-image data by said original-image data receiving unit, for generating reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data; and

a unit for associating the original-image data, which has been received by said original-image data receiving unit, and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated by said image data generating unit.

15. An image database registration system comprising:

an image file input unit for inputting an image file which includes an additional-information recording area in which additional information has been recorded and an image-data recording area in which image data representing an image has been recorded;

an additional-information reading unit for reading the additional information that has been recorded in the additional-information recording area included in the image file input from said image file input unit;

an image data reading unit for reading the image

data that has been recorded in the image-data recording area included in the image file input from said image file input unit; and

a storage control unit for storing the additional information that has been read by said additional-information reading unit and the image data that has been read by said image data reading unit in a storage unit in association with each other.

16. An image database search system comprising:

a storage unit in which additional information, which has been recorded in an additional-information recording area of an image file, and image data, which has been recorded in an image-data recording area of the image file, are stored in association with each other;

an additional-information input unit for inputting additional information;

a search unit which, on the basis of the additional information that has been input from said additional-information input unit, retrieves the corresponding image data from said storage unit; and

an image data output unit for outputting image data that has been found by the search conducted by said search unit.

17. A method of controlling the operation of a server system capable of communicating with a client computer via a network, comprising the steps of:

receiving original-image data that is sent;

generating, in response to receipt of the original-

image data, reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data; and

associating the original-image data that has been received and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated.

18. An image database registration method comprising the steps of:

inputting an image file which includes an additional-information recording area in which additional information has been recorded and an image-data recording area in which image data representing an image has been recorded;

reading the additional information that has been recorded in the additional-information recording area included in the image file that has been input;

reading the image data that has been recorded in the image-data recording area included in the image file that has been input; and

storing the additional information that has been read and the image data that has been read in a storage unit in association with each other.

19. An image database search method comprising the steps of:

storing additional information, which has been recorded in an additional-information recording area of

an image file, and image data, which has been recorded in an image-data recording area of the image file, in a storage unit in association with each other;

inputting additional information;

on the basis of the additional information that has been input, retrieving the corresponding image data from said storage unit; and

outputting image data that has been found by retrieval.

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20. A recording medium storing a program for controlling a server system capable of communicating with a client computer via a network, said program controlling a computer of the server system so as to:

receive original-image data that has been sent;

generate, in response to receipt of the original-image data, reduced-data-quantity image data of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data; and

associate the original-image data that has been received and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated.

21. A computer-readable recording medium storing a program for registering image data in an image database, said program controlling a computer of the image database so as to:

input an image file which includes an additional-

information recording area in which additional information has been recorded and an image-data recording area in which image data representing an image has been recorded;

read the additional information that has been recorded in the additional-information recording area included in the image file that has been input;

read the image data that has been recorded in the image-data recording area included in the image file that has been input; and

store the additional information that has been read and the image data that has been read in a storage unit in association with each other.

22. A computer-readable recording medium storing a program for searching image data that has been registered in an image database, said program controlling a computer of the image database so as to:

input additional information;

on the basis of the additional information that has been input, retrieve the corresponding image data from a storage unit in which additional information, which has been recorded in an additional-information recording area of an image file, and image data, which has been recorded in an image-data recording area of the image file, have been stored in association with each other; and

output image data that has been found by retrieval.